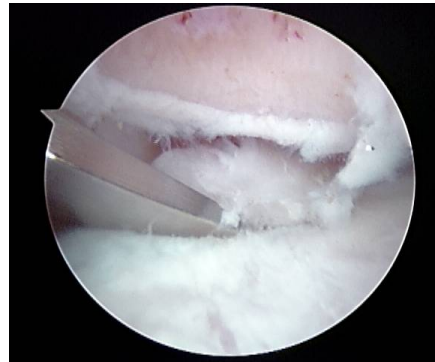


## Arthroscopy

Arthroscopy is a minimally invasive way to explore a joint by the use of a small camera and television monitor. Small instruments are used to help manipulate structures within the joint. Arthroscopy can be performed as a diagnostic tool, therapeutic tool, or, most often, both. In the dog, most of the joints can be effectively scoped. The carpus (wrist) and tarsus (ankle) are more difficult, and typically this technique is reserved for large dogs. The WestVet surgeons have spent years learning arthroscopic techniques, and have been a part of a rapidly expanding area of veterinary surgery.

Arthroscopic joint examination involves making 2-3 small portals into the joint. The scope and instruments are then placed into the joint through these portals. From the scope and camera, a digital image is displayed to a monitor. The surgeon may then inspect the joint. Problems that can be identified and treated via arthroscopy include cartilage defects, fractures, and ligament or tendon tears. Meniscal injuries of the knee can also be identified and treated. Arthroscopy is also an excellent, minimally invasive way to obtain biopsies from a joint.



Arthroscopy  
of a Canine  
Elbow

Picture of a  
postoperative  
elbow  
arthroscopy –  
3 portals



Specific problems within the shoulder that can be managed arthroscopically include OCD, biceps tendonopathies, and shoulder instability. Elbow diseases that can be managed arthroscopically are mostly related to elbow dysplasia, and include OCD, fragmented medial coronoid process, and, on occasion, ununited anconeal process. Debridement, or clean out, procedures for severe arthritis can also be performed in some cases.

The knee, or stifle, is the joint that is most commonly explored and treated arthroscopically.

The most common application is in patients with a torn cranial cruciate ligament. In these patients, the knee is explored to evaluate for cartilage damage, to confirm ligament tears in cases of partial cranial cruciate ligament tears, and to evaluate and treat meniscal injuries. Areas of damage, including the torn fibers of the cranial cruciate ligament, are debrided. Most meniscal injuries require removal of the torn portions of meniscus, but on occasion the meniscal injury can be repaired. This provides a distinct advantage over open procedures, in

which removal is always performed. Additionally, veterinary studies have begun to show the advantages of evaluating and treating the knee, specifically the meniscus, arthroscopically, and these techniques are beginning to become the preferred method of treatment. Other diseases of the knee that can be treated arthroscopically include OCD and traumatic patella luxation (dislocation of the knee cap) in large dogs.

Arthroscopy of the hip and carpus is mostly limited to a diagnostic tool. OCD of the tarsus can be treated arthroscopically in some large dogs.

Ask your veterinarian if referral for arthroscopic surgery is an option. The WestVet surgeons see consultations by referral only.